

*A Brief Account of the Earthquake at Aix la Chapelle (Aachen) on Monday, August 26, 1878. By Henry Phillips, Jr., A. M.*

*(Read before the American Philosophical Society, March 21, 1879.)*

For several days prior to this occurrence the weather within a circuit of one hundred miles had been excessively rainy and quite cool for the season. Sunday, August the 25th, was chilly and lowering, although the barometer seemed inclined to rise. The next morning (Monday) dawned with rain falling in torrents, which continued at intervals during the remainder of the day and the whole of that night, driving the strangers visiting at Aix to seek refuge within their hotels and lodging houses. At about five minutes before nine o'clock in the morning a heavy shock of an earthquake, recurring in several waves, was experienced, and again, although of fainter intensity, at 9.05, 9.30 and 11.05, in the forenoon of the same day.

The first (viz., that at 8.55) was the most violent, moved in the direction from north north-west to south-south-east, the vibrations continuing in this plane for several seconds. A very heavy rolling, rumbling sound, apparently *not* subterranean, resembling that caused by the simultaneous passage through the streets of cumbersome deeply-loaded wagons, accompanied the disturbance.

In the upper portions of the dwellings the brunt of the shock was most forcibly felt; glassware and crockery were thrown down from their places and shattered on the floor, the window panes were rattled with great force, the bedsteads were swung in the direction of the motion. In the hotel where I was sojourning there was great consternation, and ladies rushed out terrified into the corridors, believing the building was about to fall upon them. I was at that moment ascending the grand stairway of the hotel, when I was suddenly seized, as I imagined, with a dizziness; everything reeled or rolled before me, the steps seemed to come towards and recede from me, and I seated myself, believing that I was suffering from an attack of vertigo. After a few seconds I perceived by the confusion of surrounding people that there was something really amiss. The oscillations became more and more violent, and it seemed as though the whole town was about to be laid in ruins. Many chimneys were demolished, the stone base of a weathercock on the Deaf Mute Asylum was thrown to the ground, a figure of an angel in the Church of the Holy Cross fell, striking terror into the hearts of the early worshipers, who fled in dismay, the officiating priest and his assistants escaping with great difficulty.

The long continuance of the first shock wrought a strong impression upon the inhabitants, who, pallid and trembling, rushed forth into the streets, while others stood with fixed gaze in the open air, as if paralyzed by fear or rooted to the ground. Some in their anguish fell upon their knees in prayer, calling loudly upon the saints in heaven for their intercession and protection. The market women, the letter carriers and all those whose business required them to be out at this early hour in the morning were witnesses of many ridiculous spectacles.

Surmounting the Polytechnic Institution there stands a colossal statue of Minerva, from which the hand and the point of her lance were broken off by the shock, and great rents were made in the bust, knees, head and the folds of its drapery. Two of the smaller turrets of the Treppen-haus portion of Rath Haus were said to be so seriously damaged as to involve their removal.

The barometer marked as follows :

Sunday, August 25, 10 P. M., 27.3.

Monday, August 26, 6 A. M., 27.282.

" " 9 A. M., 27.21.

The first shock is reported to have lasted about ten seconds, those which were later were less violent as well as shorter in their durations. It is a noteworthy fact that the last two earthquakes with which the city of Aachen has been favored have likewise taken place at an early hour of the morning ; that of October 22, 1873, at 9.45 A. M., and that of June 24, 1877, at 8.50 A. M.

The disturbance was by no means a local one, but extended as far as the Hague, being experienced with considerable violence at Cologne, Brauweiler, Horrem, Forst, Altenberg, Herzogenrath, Stolberg, Elberfeld, Osnabrück, Barmen, Graffenich, Eschweiler, Düsseldorf, Nivelsteen, Lennep, Mountjoie, Linn, Jüngersdorff, Haum, St. Töuis, Reviges, &c., &c.

On Tuesday, August 27, the weather altered, being cool and showery in the forenoon and clear and bright in the afternoon and evening.

*Stated Meeting, April 4, 1879.*

Present, 15 members.

Vice-President, Mr. ELI K. PRICE, in the Chair.

A letter accepting the appointment to prepare an obituary notice of the late Henry J. Williams, was received from the Hon. M. Russell Thayer, dated Philadelphia, March 31, 1879.

A letter declining the appointment to prepare an obituary notice of the late Dr. McQuillen, was received from Dr. R. Kenderdine, dated Philadelphia, March 25, 1879.

On motion of Dr. R. E. Rogers, he was excused, and Dr. Agnew was appointed to prepare an obituary notice of the late Rev. Dr. Beadle.

A letter was received from Mr. Henry Bradshaw, Librarian